THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, May 29, 1809.

Melancholy Catastrophe of Miss Shuckburgh and Lieutenant Sharp.

THE following are the circumstances relative to the very melancholy death, aged 21 years, of that truly amiable and accomplished lady, Miss Shuckburgh, daughter of Sir Stewkley Shuckburgh, bart. of Shuckburgh Park, in Warwickshire. Lieutenant Sharp, of the Bedfordshire militia, with the other officers of that regiment, quartered at Daventry, frequently visited at Shuckburgh Park, during which visits, Mr. Sharp formed or professed to have formed an attachment for Miss Shuckburgh. As soon as the baronet perceived that Mr. Sharp's attentions to Miss Shuckburgh wore the appearance of particularity, he enquired into his character and connections, and finding neither such as he approved, he communicated the intelligence he had received respecting them to his daughter, and immediately desired Mr. Sharp to discontinue his visits at the park, as he would no longer be received there. Miss Shuckburgh also wrote to him to the same effect, and desired him to return her letters. From that moment he seems to have conceived the dreadful idea of destroying her and himself, for his answer to her was—

"You shall have your letters, and I will have revenge—revenge is sweet, and revenge arising from disappointed love is most inveterate."

Defeated in his hopes of obtaining the object of his wishes, he by excessive drinking worked himself up to the highest pitch of frenzy, during which he meditated the horrid deed which he afterwards perpetrated. As an interchange of letters was to take place, it was agreed between them that they should

be left in a summer-house, a short distance from the mansion. About half past seven o'clock in the morning, Miss Shuckburgh was observed by the butler to go out of the house with a parcel of letters in her hand, which excited his curiosity, and induced him to watch her. She went towards the summer-house, and he took a circuitous way to the same spot. As soon as he got to the door he heard two voices, and the first words which he distinctly heard were those of Miss Shuckburgh saying "No, no, no," in answer, as he supposed, to a proposal of elopement. A pistol was immediately fired, and one fell; the butler was about to open the door, when in the space of two seconds another pistol was fired, and the other fell; the butler then alarmed the family, and on opening the door, Miss Shuckburgh and Mr. Sharp were found lifeless on the floor.

The two letters of the 24th and 26th of March, addressed by Mr. Sharp to Miss Shuckburgh, found un-opened in the summer-house after the shocking event, prove beyond all doubt that the interview which ended in this sad catastrophe was on Miss Shuckburgh's part fortuitous; that she had not the least expectation of seeing Mr. Sharp, but went solely for the purpose of leaving the letters she had received from him, and of carrying away those she had written. They were as follow:—

"*Friday, March* 24, 1809.

"Caroline! O my beloved Caroline! I can but a short time longer endure your cruel scorn; prepare to hear the worst of me, and take care of yourself. O! my heavens! how loth I am to die, but you compel me to leave you; for, was ever the time to come when you would have no parents to oppose your will, I dare not, cannot think you would make me happy. I wish once more to read your dear letters, and then, on my honour, I will bring them to the cave to-morrow night, and shall expect to find mine in the same place on Sunday night. If you love me, tell me where you are going on Monday with Frank and your dear father. Your professions of love are as ardent as I could possibly wish; would to God that your actions were as convincing! then, indeed, I should be happy. Caroline, my fate is certain; I am sorry you will not let me live; I am no child in my determination; when once fixed, it is immoveable; I have no earthly things to live for, for you will never be mine; so I will seek another and a better world. I can now again scarcely believe you love me, as you will not trust me with your sweet letters, but I shall soon be insensible to every thing; and on my word you may depend on my putting them at the cave some time to-morrow night. When I am dead, read them over, and judge of my delight when I received

ceived them; and of my anguish to be obliged to give them up. My preparations to quit this world take up so much of my time, that I cannot say more than, God bless you! and may he for ever protect you from the miserable awful end of your truly faithful and affectionate, though wretched,

" PHILIP A. S."

" I implore and supplicate your prayers; and most fervently and sincerely will I pray, in my last moments, that you may never feel the least remorse of conscience, as the cause of my suicide, for it was in your power, and your's only, to save me, but you treat with disdain all my arguments. Adieu, for ever adieu.

" P. A. S."

" I came so fully assured of seeing you last night, that I was not prepared to die, or indeed I should. I acknowledge you have good grounds to treat my threats so slightly, but the time will come when you may see my resolution is not to be shaken. What would have been your feelings (if you have any feelings), had you found me with my brains blown out at the cave this morning, which certainly would have been the case, had I not put such confidence in your coming to meet me? O! for shame, Caroline; so long as the gentlemen were over their wine, not to spare me one short moment, to make my death easy; but I forgive you, nor will I repine at my unhappy lot. Had you seen my brains scattered on the earth, you could have taken my letter from my cold hand, and read it with composure, without shedding a pitying tear.

" P. A. S."

Extracts from the Letter, dated Sunday Morning, two o'Clock, March 26, 1809.

" Now that I have settled, as well as my agitated mind will allow me, all my earthly affairs, I will devote my last sad moments to my ever and for ever beloved Caroline, provided the contents of your letter, I expect to find at the cave, does not compel me to kill you, as well as myself, which I hope in Heaven it will not. I came firmly resolved to die; I have exerted all my energy to live, but without you it cannot be; all my religion and fortitude I had used to possess, has now left me; and indeed I am a wretched mortal; and yet I feel not the least fear of death, but can with pleasure and composure quit this life, for it is impossible I can suffer more; and if you doubt me still, which I shall believe you do, if you say one other word about your letters, I think I shall be tempted to take you with me, to that other and that better world you talk so much about; where we shall be united, never, never to part;

then, indeed, we shall enjoy that bliss your cruel parents deny us here; but I fervently hope your letter will be kind, and give me another solemn vow never to be another's; then I can die alone and contented; but if you give me room to suspect that you will ever become any one's wife but mine, the thought will be certain death."

"I am contented to die, and fervently do I hope you may be able to live, and live happy, and sometimes think of me. I have from my heart and soul forgiven all who have injured me, and hope they will grant me their forgiveness. I feel not the least resentment against any one, and I feel I can die happy."

A short note, containing only the following expressions, was found in Mr. Sharp's pocket, after his death:—

"Caroline, Caroline, shame, shame upon you; not one kind line at parting, cruel, cruel girl, adieu for ever!"

But it is supposed that on seeing her come at a distance, he hastily thrust it into his pocket, and wrote in pencil the following words, which were found lying in the room:

"I cannot live, and feared I should not have had resolution. I shall do it with more composure than I could have possibly expected."

The letters written to Miss Shuckburgh were scattered about the room; those written by her were sealed up under cover directed to Sir Stewkley Shuckburgh, and placed in a cupboard in the summer-house. The pistol with which Mr. Sharp shot Miss Shuckburgh, he threw to the opposite end of the room; that with which he destroyed himself lay close by his right hand; he had two other loaded pistols, one in his pocket, and the other was placed by the letters in the cupboard; he had also six bullets in his pocket.

The coroner's inquest was held the next day, and a verdict was returned of lunacy respecting Mr. Sharp, and that Miss Shuckburgh died by his hand. She was not at all disfigured by the shot, there being no appearance of it but the small perforation where the bullet penetrated, which was on the left side of her head. A more angelick corpse was never seen; as in life, so in death, her countenance exhibited a smile of complacency. Her remains were interred in the family vault at Shuckburgh, on Monday the 3d of April. The amiable and virtuous life of this young lady, is the only source of consolation which her distressed family and friends have under this extraordinary and most afflictive occurrence.

We do not recollect hearing of an instance in which violent passions, apparently unchecked either by reason or religion, have produced more lamentable consequences.

THE

THE CRUMB OF PROFUSION.

IT has been for ages a favourite doctrine with our best writers, that virtue is always neglected, that vice is caressed and exalted, that truth and justice are rarely found in courts, and that flattery and lying are the only wings on which the needy are certain to ascend to stations of eminence and comfort. That this doctrine is by no means general, I shall endeavour to illustrate in the following simple fact, and that the most safe and easy policy is that which is founded in justice and in truth.

This morning, while I was taking my first meal, a young man of very respectable appearance entered the room, followed by a brace of pointers; when he had placed his loaded gun upon the hooks above the chimney-piece, the sportsman sat down at the end of a long oaken table, and demanded of my landlord to bring forth his loaf and his cheese, with a mug of his best October. In a few seconds the mandate was complied with, and the buck's-horn-handled knife as swiftly performed its office. The rind was separated from the cheese, and divided between the hungry dogs at his feet, with a portion, not very small, of the ale-man's delicious brown manchet, a particle of which rolled towards the foot of a poor farmering man, who sat at the other extremity—he was smoking a short pipe, and as silent as modesty could make him; the rustic beheld the crumb of profusion, snatched it from the clay floor, and conveyed it to his lips. "You must be hungry, indeed, my friend," said the sportsman. "I am not hungry," replied the man, "my conduct proceeds from a different cause." "And what may that cause be?" rejoined the sportsman. "The reverence I bear towards a grain of wheat," was the answer. "I am no stranger, Sir," continued he, "to the labour that attends on its vegetation, from breaking up the earth for its reception, to the blow of the flail that prepares it for the bushel. I have felt, Sir, the farmer's hopes after sowing that precious morsel, and I have partaken of his joy when he beheld it first divide the clod that covered it, and appeared green above the surface—when summer has called it into ear I have sung with the reapers, and thrust, with them, my sickle into the waving treasure; and as the last load of the harvest has entered the barn, I have joined with the thrasher in blessing the bounteous hand that so generously provided for our necessities. And can I see that grain of wheat become the food of dogs? I trembled as I saw it fall, and conveyed it to that mouth providence designed it should refresh. I say, I trembled as it fell; for at that moment I was thinking on the millions in want of this life-preserving agency. It was for these reasons I took up the crumb that fell before me, Sir."

"And

" And pray what are you," said the sportsman, " that can reason so largely on so small a subject?" " I am nothing," replied the man. " Are you acquainted with the business of a farm?" " My father," returned the man, " was a farmer of some eminence in this county, but, from his humanity and liberality, he failed; care, persecution, and ingratitude, rent his heart-strings asunder, and he left me with an informed mind only, to struggle with the mercenary for that which I obtain with great difficulty—a livelihood!"

" Then you have been used to the management of a farm?" said the sportsman. " I have," returned the man, " as you may perceive, from striking the first furrow to housing the grain." " How are you circumstanced at this time?" " Without employment, or you had not seen me idle in a pot-house." " Could you look after a farm of three hundred acres?" " I can," was the answer. " I want a bailiff," said the sportsman, " and I think one who can be so solicitous for the preservation of a grain of wheat, will as carefully look after the whole produce. There is my address," continued the sportsman, tearing off the superscription of a letter; " come to me to-morrow by ten o'clock; I will try your ability, and if I find you worthy, you shall say you have a friend."

The sportsman then paid the landlord, took his gun from the books, whistled his dogs, and departed. I saw the hand-writing—it was Lord M——, Milton Abbey, Dorset.

INTERESTING TRIAL.

COURT of KING's BENCH, Thursday, May 11.

JONES *v.* JONES.

THIS was a case of considerable public interest, and established the fact, of landlords and innkeepers being answerable for the property of their customers, while under their roof. It was an action tried at the last Hereford assizes, before Mr. Baron Wood, the facts of which were as follow:—

The plaintiff had a rider in his employ, named Evan Jones, who left London in December last, and in five days after arrived at an inn at Wrexham, in Denbighshire, kept by the defendant. The inn being full, the rider was obliged to sleep in a three-bedded room, two of which were occupied by the defendant's own family. The rider swore at the trial, that on the morning of his arrival at Wrexham he had a pocket-book, containing 400l. in bank notes; that meeting with several of his Welch friends, he drank freely, but was not intoxicated. On going to bed at night he recollected placing his waistcoat in

in a chair by his bed's side, and the pocket-book was safe. When he awoke the next morning his clothes were there, but his pocket-book was gone; upon which he raised the whole family, declared his loss, and all joined in searching the bed-chamber, but the pocket-book could no where be found. The defendant and his wife appeared extremely anxious that the pocket-book should be found, and actually sent for a constable to assist in the search. In answer to this the defendant brought all his servants and children to prove, that they never saw the pocket-book; and the judge summed up in favour of the defendant, observing, that it was a very hard law against innkeepers, who were made liable for the security of the goods of their guests; and unless the jury were satisfied with the evidence of the rider, they would find for the defendant. The jury, however, consulted together for some time, and found a verdict for the plaintiff.—Damages 400l.

Mr. Jervis came to court this term, and obtained a rule to shew cause why the verdict should not be set aside, and a new trial had; that verdict being against the directions of the judge. This day the case came to be fully argued, and since the court granted the conditional rule, the following extraordinary fact had come to light. The defendant had fallen into distress, his goods were seized in execution, and a public sale advertised on the 29th ult. on which day the auctioneer, in presence of the persons assembled, put up for sale a bed and mattresses, remarking, that it was the same in which the young man had slept who lost the 400l. The lot was purchased by a person, who joined in making affidavit of the fact; and, to his astonishment and surprize, between the two old mattresses, which were under the feather-bed, the lost pocket book was discovered, and the 400l. in notes, within it. Upon the knowledge of that fact, Mr. Jervis suggested that if a new trial was not granted that a *stet processus* should be awarded, and the defendant spared from payment of the costs. Mr. Jervis added, that the defendant was most interested for his character, which had suffered by the verdict; and he contended, that the rider having gone to bed intoxicated might, by the cunning some men possessed in their intoxication, have hid the book between the mattresses, and the next morning lost all recollection of the fact.

The chief baron admitted, that it was a sort of action which required as much strictness in proof as in a trial for felony; and that the imprudent conduct of the rider laid him open to a severe cross-examination; but the jury believing his testimony, had come to a right conclusion. The subsequent finding of the pocket-book was a decisive confirmation of the truth of his story; and though he did not mean to attach suspicion to the defendant or his wife, yet he might have dishonest people about him; and he could not believe the pocket-book

was between the mattresses on the morning of the search. He rather believed, from the noise the circumstance had occasioned in the country, the party who took the pocket-book was apprehensive it could not be got rid of without detection, and had, therefore, placed it between the mattresses previous to the sale. Upon the whole, he saw no grounds for disturbing the verdict, or for granting a *stet processus*.

The other judges concurred in opinion, and the rule for a new trial was discharged.

HYDROPHOBIA.

[Extract from Dr. Rees's Cyclopædia.]

WE know of no instance of the complaint (canine madness) being cured, nor have we, in any instance, even attempted any thing of the kind; but we flatter ourselves, that we have been successful in bringing forward a preventive. We claim not the discovery of this most valuable and truly important remedy; we only, by exertion, rescued it from oblivion, and by a long course of well-conducted experiments, have established the certainty of its efficacy, that of more than ninety animals, as horses, sheep, swine, and dogs, one only has gone mad, to whom this remedy was administered, and this failure did not occur under our own immediate inspection, so that it might have been wasted or brought up. This remedy, as prepared by us, is as follows:

Take of the fresh leaves of the box tree, two ounces; of the fresh leaves of rue, two ounces; of sage, half an ounce; chop these fine, and boil in a pint of water to half a pint; strain carefully and press out the liquor very firmly; put back the ingredients into a pint of milk, and boil again to half a pint; strain as before; mix both liquors, which forms three doses for a human subject. Double this quantity is proper for a cow or horse; two-thirds for a large dog, half for a middle sized, and one-third for a small dog. Three doses are sufficient, given each subsequent morning, fasting; the quantity directed being that which forms these doses. As it sometimes produces strong effects on dogs, it may be proper to begin with a small dose, increasing it 'till the effects are evident, by the sickness, panting, and uneasiness of the dog. In the human subject, where this remedy appears equally efficacious, we have never witnessed any unpleasant effects. About forty human persons have taken this remedy, and in every instance it has succeeded, equally, as with animals. That this remedy, therefore, has a preventive quality is unquestionable, and now perfectly established; for there was not the smallest of the animals

mals mentioned that was found to be bitten, although great pains were, in every instance, taken to ascertain the point.

The writer of the above article in Dr. Rees's Cyclopædia, has attentively observed, during its whole progress, above two hundred cases of canine madness, and has dissected near one hundred bodies of dogs, who died of the malady.

CHARITY SCHOOLS.

SCHOOLS for the instruction of poor children are the only sure means of regenerating our land. From such institutions valuable consequences must accrue to the next generation. In the mean time, we must not expect that any thing short of such measures can effectually counteract the pernicious effects of vice, which threaten our country. Indeed, kings may issue their proclamations, lawgivers may enact their statutes, judges may twice a year ascend their tribunals, prisons may be crowded with culprits, lands may be sought out in the remotest parts of the earth for banishment, nay, gibbets may be erected in every part of our island, and bodies hung thereon 'till the air become pestilential; yet, after all, the utmost efforts of legislative skill will prove ineffectual, provided the religious education of the poor be neglected. They shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of their folly shall they go astray!

In the sacred writings we read of a tree whose virtues sweetened and purified the waters of Marah—the tree of knowledge has a similar efficacy on the human heart, that capacious fountain out of which flow the issues of life. So true are the words of Shakespeare:—

"Ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing with which we fly to Heav'n!"

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS *in* NORTH WALES.

THE spirit of improvement has of late years manifested itself vigorously in North Wales. Among those whose exertions have been of the greatest magnitude and importance, William Alexander Madocks, esq. of Dolymylynlyn, in Merionethshire, may justly be reckoned. For the last six years this gentleman's attention to every plan which promised to be of public advantage, has never slackened; and the following improvements from his plans and under his inspection, have in that short period been executed, or are far advanced:

A new harbour at Porthdynllyn, whence a safe and constant passage may at all times be effected to Ireland, as there is sufficient water for passage-boats at ebb tide. This great undertaking, of which Mr. Jones Parry is also an eminent promoter, is very nearly completed, and a new road from this harbour to join the English roads, is in great forwardness, by which travellers from London to Dublin will save thirty miles, besides the time, delay, and danger, of crossing the Conway and Bangor ferries.

An improved line of perfectly level road, leading through the new town of Tre Madoc, and through much romantic and beautiful scenery, to Worcester and London, is also making, by which forty miles will be saved between Dublin and Bath, Cheltenham, and the western towns. An excellent road marked out on the ground by Mr. Madocks himself, assisted by Dr. Morris, of Morva Lodge, on the sides of mountains so steep, that a man could scarcely walk upright, from Point Abergasslyn, to the new town of Tre Madoc, is lately completed. This town, which is rapidly increasing, will, when finished, contain one street of a mile in length, and several cross streets of a quarter of a mile each, besides three squares. There are already built, a large church, a market-place, and elegant market-house, two excellent inns, and upwards of one hundred houses, all of grey granite, and covered with blue slate. A weekly market is established, with an annual fair and races. The ground it stands on, with some hundreds of acres adjoining, was gained from the sea by embanking in 1800. A considerable woollen manufactory has been established in the neighbourhood, and an improved tan-work, in which the tormentil is used. A harbour at Ynys Cognor is in great forwardness, and a canal from thence to the town of Tre Madoc finished. About eight years ago Mr. Madocks gained, by embanking, 1800 acres of land from the sea, the greater part of which now sets for from thirty to forty shillings an acre.

Another embankment is now begun of shore lands contiguous, by which 8500 acres of equal value will be gained. An iron rail-way will be placed on the top of the embankment, which will connect the counties of Carnarvon and Merioneth, before separated by this oozy inlet of the sea. Rocky spots and mountainous steeps, to a great extent, have been covered with wood, and every year considerable tracts of mountain are inclosed and covered with larch, and so rapid has been the growth of these plantations, that the parts first enclosed are already worth from 60l. to 100l. an acre. The scarcity of wood in this part of Wales, and the importance of Ynys Cognor harbour, will render such plantations of immense value to the next generation. These public improvements are widely felt by the adjoining counties, and when the harbour and new roads

roads are finished, the influx of wealth into this part of North Wales, will totally alter and improve the condition of the inhabitants.

The Caernarvonshire agricultural society, duly appreciating the importance of improvement, has appropriated a class of premiums to tenants only; those who have their farms in the best general state of cultivation, and in the neatest and most exact order as to fences, drains, &c. or who shall drain or improve the greatest quantity of land, or lay most manure, or raise and consume on the farms the best crops of turnips or cabbages, or lay down the greatest quantity of pasture or hay, or raise the greatest number of forest trees, will be entitled to premiums varying from fifteen guineas to two guineas and a half.

WATER SPOUTS AT SEA.

NEARLY the whole of the following paper was transmitted to Sir Joseph Banks, on the return of William Ricketts, esq. commander in the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas, in 1800 and 1801, and is deposited in the archives of the royal society.

"From the sensation of alarm generally prevailing in ships on the approach of water spouts, and the serious consequences that may result from the endeavours of mariners to avoid them, I have been induced to believe that any communication tending to throw light on the subject, cannot fail to prove very desirable to the royal society.

"Previously to the month of July, 1800, my opinion of water spouts was formed on the basis of those popularly inculcated among sailors. By them I was led to imagine that all water spouts were solid columns of water, pumped up, as it were, by the action of the clouds from the sea, the vicinity to which was attended with imminent danger, as well from a vortex created by the ascending fluid, as from the occasional fall of a tremendous deluge from above; and it was under considerable apprehensions arising from such impressions, that at the latter end of July, 1800, (while sailing among the Lipari Islands), I was suddenly awakened by a hurried exclamation from the officer on watch, that a water-spout was near, and would soon be aboard us. On my reaching the deck, (which was done without the delay of dressing,) I immediately perceived from the larboard quarter, that a phenomenon of that nature was actually approaching us. The night at this time was dark and calm, though the water was slowly undulated. The clouds were generally low, black, and stationary, while the object of alarm, but a few yards from the quarter, appeared as

part of a cloud itself, descending in a tapering and circular form to the sea. Hardly had we time to make these observations, before the spout (accompanied by a broken sound of sharp and heavy rain), moving at the rate of two knots, proceeded gloomily towards us, almost touching our stern; and in less than two minutes more, the whole phenomenon, without any visible alteration of form, had suddenly and totally disappeared. It was particularly remarked, that the moment the spout had proceeded beyond the larboard quarter, a light air of wind came in from that point, as though we had been becalmed by its approach; and, on examination, the after part of our main-sail was found to be wetter than the rest.

"As, from the latter circumstances, and the dampness sensibly felt by all those who stood only in their linen on deck, no doubt could possibly be entertained that, had the popular notion of a created vortex, &c. been correct, inevitable destruction must have followed; it afterwards became with me a matter of doubt, how far experience would prove the received opinions to be just. Respecting the propriety of these doubts, a very fine opportunity of judging not long afterwards occurred. It was in the month of November, 1801, whilst cruising along the Istrian shore, that, soon after noon, our attention was excited by the appearance, in the south, of a lofty black inverted column, resting as it were on the sea, and reaching to the clouds. Round the lower extremity of this column, there arose a thick and voluminous vapour (resembling steam), which, on its attaining a moderate height, flew out in scroll or volute-like forms to the east and the west. Whilst we were occupied by the above phenomenon, our attention was hastily diverted by what at first appeared only a small agitation of the water; afterwards, by observing it rise into a vapour; and ultimately, by seeing that vapour ascend in the form of a cloudy pillar from the sea. In the mean time (that is, from the moment the vapour began to appear,) a dark cloud immediately over, was observed to be dilating itself (downward) into the shape of an udder, from whence there instantly descended a pillar, similar in figure and colour to the former.

"It was then directly remarked, that although the velocity of both these pillars, or parts of a pillar, was increasing as they drew near, yet, that the speed of the upper one was considerably greater than that of the lower; this disproportion continuing 'till they had nearly united, when a junction, on both sides, was rapidly formed. During the period of making the latter remarks, the column first noticed was suddenly divided more than two thirds down; the superior part flying upwards like the curling of a shaving, whilst the other sunk away with the vapour, which previously began to subside. In several other parts of the same dark cloud, great downward swellings,

or udders, appeared, under which, but not always in a vertical direction, the water was seen to foam, and vapours of different elevations arose, producing an effect extremely curious, and altogether difficult to describe. In all, seven water spouts were completely organised, out of which number two were made as curves, retaining that shape throughout; one enlarged its original curve, 'till it became a perpendicular; two others, leaning obliquely, never altered their position 'till broken; and the remainder, being at first vertical, were always the same, and beautifully formed.

"However curious, on perusal, may seem the preceding remarks, there remains one still more extraordinary to be stated. It is, that straight up the centre of several spouts, (like quicksilver in a glass tube) we could distinctly mark the ascension of a fluid, light in its colour, and subject to great variations in its pace; but it was constantly observed, that the nearer the spouts approached to perpendicular, the more actively the fluid was moved. The durations of the above phenomena were from three to five minutes; and it is proper to observe, that not the smallest symptoms of falling water was at any time seen, though one of the spouts was scarcely constructed before it was destroyed. It is necessary to add, that our estimated distance from them was from six to eight miles, and that the wind was considered as light, though it had blown fresh for several days before from the south-east, accompanied with almost continued rain."

BON MOT.

A Country surgeon, on a visit at a friend's house, observing the servant had got a wig, who was himself bald, after bantering him a considerable time, said, "You see, Dick, how bald I am, yet I don't wear a wig." To which the servant, looking steadfastly at the doctor, shrewdly replied—"True, Sir, an empty barn requires no thatch.

THE LETTER-BOX.

No. 71.

TO THE EDITOR.

AS I wish the Letter-Box to be the repository of my past as well as present performances, I shall beg of you to insert the following poem. It was printed in 1804, but excited little public interest; I shall, therefore, submit it to the perusal

of

of your readers, trusting in their mercy as critics, merely for old acquaintance sake. X.

A PATRIOTIC POEM,

DEDICATED TO THE LOYAL DOCK VOLUNTEERS.

Arma virumque cano.

DEDICATION.

GENTLEMEN,

At such an alarming crisis as the present, wrapt in the awful gloom of uncertainty, and big with the fate of nations, nothing obtains more just admiration, than the public spirit of patriotism and unanimity which every where prevails. The whole kingdom is in arms, eager to support their national dignity, and to defend the cause of freedom; and it must afford universal satisfaction to behold such brave and spirited subjects as *you*, coming freely forward to withstand the enemies of their king and country.

In the event of invasion, I am confident you would be found amongst the first in the field of battle, zealous to maintain your native rights and privileges, and to preserve, unsullied, the British character.

Under the deepest impression, therefore, of your great worth in a civil, as well as military capacity, I cannot but feel pleasure in committing the following poem to the patronage of your honourable corps, thoroughly convinced that your candour as critics will equal your magnanimity as soldiers; and should this humble composition awaken the least public attention, it must be attributed more to the *respectability of its patrons* than to the *merits of the poet.*

I am, gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
THE AUTHOR.

"Island of bliss! amid the subject seas,
That thunder round thy rocky coast, set up,
At once the wonder, terror, and delight,
Of distant nations; whose remotest shores
Can soon be shaken by thy naval arm;
Not to be shook thyself, but all assaults
Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud sea-wave."

THOMSON.

The brazen trumpet seize—blow fierce and strong,
A martial theme requires a martial song,

Unlike

Unlike the notes which peaceful scenes inspire,
When love or pity tunes the dulcet lyre;
And while the muse her arduous task essays,
(Fired with a nobler hope than venal praise)
Oh may an E—lf—d not disdain to hear
Such loyal strains as charm a *patriot's* ear!

When peace of late, in festive garlands gay,
Shed o'er the scene her bright, but transient ray,
To future hours enraptur'd fancy fled,
Where smiling Ceres rear'd her golden head;
And busy commerce, long by plenty crown'd,
Spread to the eye a fair elysium round;
How truly sweet the beauteous vision prov'd!
But (tho' a stranger) ah, how soon remov'd!
Scarce had the muse her grateful tribute paid,
Ere haggard war again his wrath betray'd,
And, with prophetic voice, recall'd the brave
To take the hostile field, or mount the dubious wave.

Thus have I seen (the tedious winter past,
By tempests ruffled, and by clouds o'ercast)
When spring, at length, resumes her rich array,
Ambrosial perfumes scent the halcyon day;
From genial meads unnumber'd flow'rets rise,
And breathe their balmy incense to the skies;
But oft, hoarse-sounding, from the icy north
Some ruffian storm rolls unexpected forth,
With rage relentless, vents its blasting wind,
And leaves a desolated scene behind.

Fate rules the hour! Behold on Gallia's coasts
The lawless tyrant chears his abject hosts;
"Haste (he exclaims) to England's fertile shores!
Your's is her wealth—her boasted freedom your's!
Like some fair field, enrich'd with yellow corn,
Ting'd with the lustrous hues of orient morn,
Britannia stands—her heaps of gold unknown—
Haste then, brave hosts, and call them all your own;
Disgrace her daughters—spread distress abroad—
Her churches ravage, and defame her God—
Her king—her nobles—young and old, destroy,
'Till Albion's fate is like the fate of Troy."

Thus vaunts the boaster! rash, ambitious man!
What countless ills await thy murd'rous plan!
No threat of thine our blissful isle alarms,
Arm'd with her *fleets* she dares a *world* in arms.
Lo! still undaunted by the wintry gale,
Around thy ports her gallant vessels sail,
And as in air their painted streamers dance,
They hurl defiance to the shores of France.

But say! can *Gallia's* fleets such insults view
And not repay the debt of vengeance due?
Are not their anchors weigh'd—their sails unfurl'd—
To check those tyrants of the wat'ry world?
No! in her ports her useless barks appear,
Nor dare unmoor, whilst *British tars* are near.
But *should* our ships forsake thy guarded shore,
And thou, uncheck'd, transport thy armies o'er—
Think'st thou to *conquer?* Ah! insatiate crew!
Ere you depart, bid France a long adieu!
Drop on your native cliffs the last fond tear,
For fate prepares your certain ruin here.
Train'd to the field, behold Britannia's force
Resolved to check ambition's baneful course;
Proud of their rights, her son's impatient rouse,
Their country's cause and freedom's to espouse;
See! how the patriot bands exulting rise,
Whilst "*death or glory*" echoes thro' the skies!

(To be continued.)

For the Weekly Entertainer.

ENQUIRY RESPECTING GAY.

Mr. Editor,

IN the well known dissertations on the epitaphs of Pope, Dr. Johnson observes that "the thought in the last line that Gay is buried in the bosom of the worthy and the good, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, *is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh when it is explained that still fewer approve.*" Now, Sir, as I, unfortunately, am not of those "few," I shall feel particularly obliged to any of your correspondents, (being of the number) who will have the kindness to explain the author's meaning.

I am, Sir,
Your constant reader,
ZANY.

Bristol, May 23, 1809.

REFLECTION.

HOW happy is the man who acts upon the genuine principles of Christianity! Who does as he would be done unto, and thus preserves his mind in harmony; and, by the favour of God, continues in bodily health.

BLACKBIRD's NEST.

IN the spring of 1808, Mr. Wild, at the sign of the Plough, at Shiplake, a village between Reading and Henley, had a blackbird which built her nest in a jessamine tree, about four feet from the ground, and laid five eggs, all of which were hatched, and the hen became so gentle as to take her victuals out of Mr. Wild's hand, while on her nest, and to feed her young ones in the presence of many spectators. The young ones flew at the proper time, and the old hen, in the same year, built two other nests, and reared up her young, during which she was so gentle as to permit any person to feed her while on the nest. This spring she built her nest near the same place, reared three young ones, which are flown, and has since built another nest, is now setting on four eggs, and is so gentle, that she will feed out of the hand of any person who presents food to her. After the great hail storm, on Friday the 21st of April, a quantity of hail fell on the nest; Mr. Wild took the hen off, swept the hail away, and placed her again on her nest, where she continued as if nothing had happened.

AN ANECDOTE.

AT the last meeting of the African Institution, held at the Freemasons' Tavern on the 25th of March last, being the anniversary of the abolition of the slave-trade, the earl of Moira stated, in a very impressive speech, the following fact:

Sir Sidney Smith, having been presented by the prince-regent of Portugal with an estate in the Brazils, and with it a number of negro slaves to be employed in cultivating it, immediately liberated the slaves, and allotted unto each of them a portion of the estate, to be cultivated by them as free labourers, for their own benefit.

After hearing this account it was resolved unanimously, on the motion of Mr. Wilberforce, "That his royal highness the duke of Gloucester, the chairman of the meeting, be requested to communicate to Sir Sidney Smith the high sense entertained by the meeting of his admirable judgement and liberality in the above instance, and to return him their warmest thanks for a conduct which is so truly honourable to the British name and character, and which may be expected, in the way of example, to be productive of the happiest effects."

No event that has lately happened is so highly honourable to the British nation as the abolition of this disgraceful traffic, and its consequences will, probably, be of great importance, and render comfortable a large number of human beings.

Answer, by J. French, at Eversbot School, to W. D. Champion's Charade, inserted March 20.

HALO around the moon I've seen:
The same, I think, is what you mean.

† Similar answers have been received from T. Pearse, of Chard; H. B. of Bridgewater; John Colley, of St. German's; W. Petherick, of St. Austell; J. Melhuish, of Honiton; J. C. of Ottery; G. Pearse, near Bodmin; J. Ball, at Evershot school; and J. Woodman, of North Curry.

Answer, by J. Ball, at Evershot School, to W. Kent's Enigma, inserted the 20th of March.

THE AIR we breathe plainly makes out
The subject that you wrote about.

†*† We have received the like answer from R. Withall, of Plymouth; H. Richards, jun. of Exmouth; J. C. of Ottery; J. W. of Charmouth; J. Colley, of St. German's; R. Sibly, of Roach; T. Pearse, of Chard; W. D. Champion, and H. B. of Bridgewater; John French, at Evershot school; J. Salter, of Broadhembury; C. Crews, of Newton Abbot; William Petherick, of St. Austell; J. Melhuish, of Honiton; and G. Pearse, near Bodmin.

Answer, by S. Palmer, of Bridgewater, to H. B.'s Charade, inserted the 27th of March.

THE WHALE-BONE surely will reveal
What you endeavour'd to conceal.

☞ We have received the like answer from J. Ball and J. French, at Evershot school; W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; J. C. of Ottery; T. Byrt, of Shepton Mallet; H. Richards, jun. of Exmouth; W. Petherick, of St. Austell; J. Salter, of Broadhembury; S. Tucker, of Bugford; J. Melhuish, of Honiton; and J. M. Carveth, of Helligan.

A CHARADE, *by R. Trewavas, of Mousehole.*

MY first great Brutus and Darius slew,
Has been at China, and at rich Peru;
My useful next with ease you'll shortly find,
It keeps in awe the dark assassin's mind:
These rightly join'd an insect will display,
Which fills the mind with terror and dismay.

An ENIGMA, *by H. Ellis, of Exeter.*

LIFE, feeble life, how short! how hours roll on!
Scarce can we call them present, ere they're gone;
Whilst the stern tyrant death makes no delay,
Each in their turn must feel his pow'rful sway.
When the bright orb of light his face displays,
And animates all nature with his rays,
My petals then unfold their pleasing dye,
But soon withdraws them from th' inspecting eye,
And at the close of evening drop away,
The offspring of a transitory day.

POETRY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

FAITH: AN ODE.

CAN aught withstand the mighty force
Of raging billows? when rude whirlwinds sweep
In wild disorder o'er the watry deep;
Hurling the vessel in its giddy course,
From surge to surge, when ev'ry passing wave
Presents the horrors of a gloomy grave
To the affrighted crew. Amidst the storm
Imagination paints the ghastly form
Of meagre death itself, in dread array,
(Whose sov'reign sway
All must obey,
Tho' mortals know not when or where)
'Till overwhelm'd in comfortless despair,
The hapless sailors view no pilot near,
From the dark caverns of the deep to save
Their precious lives; nor land, nor port appears.
Hark! dreadful thunders loudly clash!
And zig-zag lightnings fiercely flash!
Heard ye, alas! the vessel crash
Against the craggy rock!
None survive the dying shock!
Alas! within the dreary deep,
Their bodies now are doom'd to sleep,
Unknown alike to ill, and unavailing tears.

Such is the scene when whirlwinds rage,
And tempests agitate the main;
In such an hour what can assuage
The boist'rous ocean? or restrain
The foaming surges that arise,
(Like mountains tow'ring to the skies)
Dealing destruction round.
Yet still there is an undecaying bound,
Further than which no waves extend;
Allotted by the ONE sublime,
Who did exist ere circling time
Began its swift career.
A bound that ever will remain,
The raging ocean to restrain
'Till time itself shall end,
When rob'd in clouds of radiance bright,
Illumin'd with etherial light,
With shining glory crown'd,
The great archangel shall appear,
To summon all before the judge profound.
Thus, like an everlasting mound,
Faith stands secure, and still remains
More firm than adamantine chains,
With which a victim's bound.

A strong foundation, which nor storm,
Nor raging tempest can deform;
It braves the strongest blow:

It is the Christian's mighty shield,
Which to no mortal pow'r will yield,
Nor dread the fiercest foe.
It ever proves his truest guide,
Thro' all the changing scenes of life,
'Midst sorrows and tumultuous strife,
Conducts him safely o'er the tide,
While hope expands the sails;
Mocks wild ambition's stern command,
Nor fears a ruthless tyrant's hand,
Tho' stain'd with human gore;
Trusting in HIM whose mighty pow'r prevails
O'er all created things;
'Till unto that celestial shore,
To taste of bliss unknown before,
Th' immortal spirit wings
Its joyful flight, where sin and sorrow are no more.

Tiverton, April 22, 1809. R. LOOSEMORE.

NANCY OF NORWICH.

MEAND'RING thro' yon verdant mead,
The Yare translucent glides along,
Where Philomela seeks the shade,
To carol forth her ev'ning song.

Soft zephyrs cool the solar ray,
Whilst thro' the glade I anxious rove;
With eager step to mark the way,
In hopes to meet the nymph I love.

From fragrant flowers spread around,
Fresh breathing odours scent the air,
My ardent wishes would be crown'd
Could I but meet my Nancy there.

Oh may some herald in the breeze,
Convey the voice which charms my ear!
The songsters warbling on the trees,
Would hail my Nancy, were she near.

Thou guardian of the silver bow,
Point but one arrow to her breast,
'Tis right my Nancy soon should know,
With her fair form I could be blest.

But ah! my wishes all are vain,
For 'tis a phantom I pursue;
No hopes are left the nymph to gain,
Alas! she will her swain undo.

Some gentle spirit of the wind,
In whispers soft convey my grief;
And tell my Nancy she's unkind,
Ask her to give my heart relief.

Ideal bliss! how swift it flies,
Its transient charms too soon beguile,
We feel the smart as blushes rise,
And oft are wounded with a smile.

Ye fragrant groves and lawns adieu!
No more I'll haunt the silent stream,
For 'tis in vain if I pursue
A nymph who will not ease my flame.

Norwich, April 11, 1809. B. R. A.